

Larry slinks out behind her with a bowl of steaming broccoli. He is grinning like a pervert and there is a rash-like blush on his neck. "Your wife says she's movin' you an' her onto the sofa so I can have the master bedroom, but I say nonsense; just move the kid in with you guys so I can have her room."

My wife and I say, in unison, "Fuck you, Larry," and my wife continues the sentiment by tacking on the book end, "Just fuck you."

I GOT THE BLUES

A soap opera on T.V.; my wife and her mother agree that the girl with the crisp blonde hair is ugly. The man in the eye patch doesn't think so. He cups her chin in his gnarled hand and kisses her lightly.

"Ugly."

"Ugly."

The tea kettle whistles. My wife silences it and pours two cups. She delivers one to Mom.

I step out into the patio; my neighbor has blown another hole through the redwood fence with his big, loud .45. The slug entered his side and left a small, clean hole. On my side, the wood is shattered and torn. My dog lies dead on the lawn. I step back into the house. The man with the eye patch has the blonde lady pushed down on the couch. Her dress is bunched around her waist, but the panty hose are still in place. The man is working, one handed, on his belt. I walk to the kitchen and pull a plastic trash bag from the drawer. I carry it back outside, lift my dog by its hind leg and drop her in. Then I drop the bag into the trash can.

LA BREA BLUES

I stopped by the Loma Alta Cafe for coffee and toast. Betty, the one-breasted waitress, poured me a cup of java that gave new meaning to the word "black."

It looked like used motor oil. Ever try the trick; you lay a paper clip flat on the surface tension of a glass of water and

it floats? I tried it on the
coffee with my car keys, and
it worked; they lay right on
top, quivering, no penetration
at all.

"Can I freshen your cup, Youngblood?"
It was Betty, standing poised with
her pot of tar.

"No, no," I said, placing my hand
over the top so she wouldn't see my
keys. But she poured anyway: it
dropped out like cold
pancake syrup — slowly
enough for me to move my
hand out of its path —
and hit my keys and
sank them.

— Dan Lenihan

Oceanside CA

TECHNICAL LOVE #47: INSPECTION

The new inspector
in her jeans
slides up next
to the machinist
to check his parts,
takes her calipers
and says this hole's
too tight,
says let me see
your tool.
He pulls it out
gleaming red,
hefty.

A real man's tool
he says.
She cinches
her micrometer
around it
gently slides
it up and down;
frowns,
a shade too small
she says,
see me at the tool crib
I'll beef it up
for you.

— Dan Powers

Gallatin TN